

PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING A MEETING AND DECISION-MAKING

A WHOLE PEOPLE'S COVENANT

The 41st General Council 2012 used A Whole People's Covenant to help define the way in which the members of the General Council sought to work together. It has been adapted here for use as a resource by all councils and church bodies.

Each of us comes as a pilgrim to this gathering of siblings in Christ. Each of us comes with our own cultural values, assumptions, and world views. Each one of us, and the cultures we represent, are God's living letters of faith, hope, love, and beauty. Therefore, we embrace the following Christian virtues that honour God and promote right relationship between us as we gather together and learn from one another:

We promise to relate to one another with:

- respect;
- humility;
- patience;
- open-mindedness;
- courage; and
- the spirit of grace and forgiveness we have received in Christ Jesus.

We acknowledge the land that we stand upon by

- remembering that Indigenous peoples have walked these paths;
- understanding that we are one part of God's creation; and
- honouring future generations by preserving this land as they find their own paths.

In our Christian love for one another we will:

- invite the Spirit into both our worship and business;
- attend to others with our whole selves: our physical senses, intuition, imagination, and intellect;
- speak for ourselves in the spirit of truth and gentleness, avoiding unhelpful generalizations and racial stereotypes;
- not interrupt when others are speaking;
- be mindful of language that is not inclusive;
- affirm the deep wisdom of silence and pause, as necessary, to ponder what others have said;
- seek to understand rather than win arguments and assume best intentions;
- hold our beliefs and opinions lightly; and
- hold one another in prayer.

Today this pilgrimage will lead us to becoming a whole people. With God's help, I will leave behind what I must to make this journey. Thanks be to God.

The United Church Manual 2026

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HOLY MANNERS

The Very Reverend Marion Pardy introduced Holy Manners as a resource for the 38th General Council 2003. Holy Manners has been used as resource for the conduct of meetings by subsequent General Councils and their executives. It has been adapted here for use as a resource by all councils and church bodies.

We will:

- keep God at the centre of everything we do;
- each speak for ourselves;
- speak for a purpose;
- separate people from problems;
- allow for full and equitable participation;
- attend to others carefully without interruption;
- welcome the conflict of ideas;
- take a future orientation;
- demonstrate appreciation;
- honour the decisions of the body;
- commit to holding one another to account when we do not keep our holy manners;
- keep the discussion at the table;
- be mindful of our body language;
- check in about good use of time;
- allow the quiet people to speak, with an invitation to speak; and
- sincerely say what we really feel.

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GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS PROCEDURES

1. **Motion:** A Council may only pass motions for which it has the authority and which do not contradict the decision of the higher council. A motion contradicting a motion already passed at the same meeting is out of order, unless it is a motion to reconsider.
 - The mover reads the motion.
 - The seconder is named.
 - The mover has the privilege of speaking at the beginning and end of the discussion of their motion.

 2. **Discussion:**
 - Start by identifying yourself (name, Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith)
 - All discussion should be directed to the President.
 - Each person may address the President only once about a motion, except the mover, who may speak both first and last.
 - The initial time allocated for the mover to address the motion is limited to three minutes.
 - All subsequent speakers limit their time to two minutes, including any reply by the mover of the motion.
 - All discussion should be clear and concise and deal only with the motion.

 3. **Amendments:**
 - Any motion to amend a motion must be dealt with before dealing with the original motion.
 - Any voting member, except the mover and seconder of the original motion, may make a motion to amend the original motion.
 - An amendment is a suggestion to change a motion slightly by:
 - i. Removing words and replacing them with others, or
 - ii. Adding or deleting words
 - An amendment cannot change the intent of a motion.
 - When all motions to amend have been dealt with, the Council may deal with the final form of the original motion.
 - A separate vote must be taken for each motion to amend.

 4. **Amendment to the Amendment:**
 - A motion to slightly change the amendment.
 - See above

 5. **Voting:**
 - Voting will take place by raising hands
 - All those with voting privileges (members) are expected to indicate their vote by raising of hands.
 - i. If there is a close vote, tellers will count.
 - ii. If there is a tie, the President will cast the deciding vote.
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- Ballots will be used for electing commissioners to General Council or other elections, as deemed necessary.

6. Motions that Interrupt the meeting:

At any time during a meeting, any voting member may make a motion to:

- Close discussion without a vote on the motion;
- Fix the time to adjourn;
- Adjourn;
- Take an immediate vote (2/3 vote required);
- Limit or extend limits of discussion (2/3 vote required);
- Postpone discussion and decision on the motion to a definite time;
- Refer the motion to another body or commission;
- Amend/change the motion; or
- Postpone discussion and decision on the motion indefinitely (without a specific time).

An original motion may be interrupted by any of the above motions.

While these motions are being dealt with, they may only be interrupted by a motion above it in the list.

7. How to Reconsider a Motion:

- A motion to reconsider a motion already passed may be made if no motion is under consideration. A motion to reconsider has the same priority as the motion to be reconsidered.
- Only a voting member who voted “yes” for the original motion may move the motion to reconsider. This motion must be seconded by a voting member.
- A motion to reconsider in an ongoing meeting must be approved by 2/3 of the voting members present.
- The revised motion may be reconsidered if a motion is changed on reconsideration and passed.
- A motion on which action has been taken may not be reconsidered.

8. Business Committee:

- Sort and clarify issues when things are bogged down in procedure, wrangles or wording problems.
- Deal with changes to the Agenda during the General Meeting.

9. Other:

- Other rules of order are contained in *The Manual*. In general, the conduct of the business is at the discretion of the President. The President may seek the advice of the Business Table. Where *The Manual* is silent, Bourinot’s Rules of Order will be used.